

The Mayor's Youth Council Returns from Washington D.C.

8 April 2006

The Mayor's Youth Council was in Washington D.C. this week to meet with federal officials and leaders of federal agencies. During the past 12 years, the trip has been an opportunity for the teens on the Mayor's Youth Council to meet with federal officials, tour the US Capital, and visit DC memorials, landmarks and museums. Each year, the MYC identifies issues to address on the federal level. The Representatives spend the months leading up to the trip researching the issues and preparing for the meetings, which have proven to be educational for the young people and enlightening for the federal officials.



Senator Kennedy encouraged us to continue to be leaders in our communities and hopes to meet with us in Boston to discuss local youth issues. Senator Kerry answered questions on bi-lingual education, his presidential campaign and college funding.



We discussed violence prevention programs with David Hagy, Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs. Mr Hagy offered us advice on initiating new programs, seeking funding and best practices. We told him about some of Boston's violence prevention efforts.



At the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, we met with the Deputy Director, Mary Ann Solberg. We previewed a new ad campaign about methamphetamines and gave feedback on their anti-drug campaign. We discussed nationwide efforts to combat substance abuse and innovative ideas about changing people's attitudes about substance abuse.



After a tour of the Capitol Building, we met with Congressman Lynch and Congressman Capuano on the steps of the Capitol. We asked Congressman Capuano about his recent visit to Darfur and how he is working to bring attention to genocide. He discussed the impact of cuts in educational funding and new developments in immigration. Congressman Lynch encouraged us to continue advocating for youth.



During the trip, we had the opportunity to meet with some people who work in other areas of politics. Wendy Button, former speechwriter for Mayor Menino, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and John Kerry talked to us about her experiences. She gave us insight on the speechwriting process and shared stories about what it was like to work on the presidential campaign. Judy Chesser and Virginia Mayer talked to us about their work as DC lobbyists on behalf of the mayors of New York and Boston.



Michael Karpman from the National League of Cities told us about the Institute for Youth, Education & Families and introduced us to the new NLC website to help youth leaders from across the country to connect and share ideas.



In a meeting with the Washington DC Youth Advisory Council, we learned that other teens are working toward the same goals that we are. We exchanged ideas on structure and operation of youth councils and issues that we are both working on.



We also took some time to tour the sites, monuments, memorials and museums of Washington D.C. including the Capitol, White House, Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington, WWII, FDR, Vietnam, Korean, and the Smithsonian.



For more information about the Mayor's Youth Council, visit our website at www.BostonYouthZone.com/myc